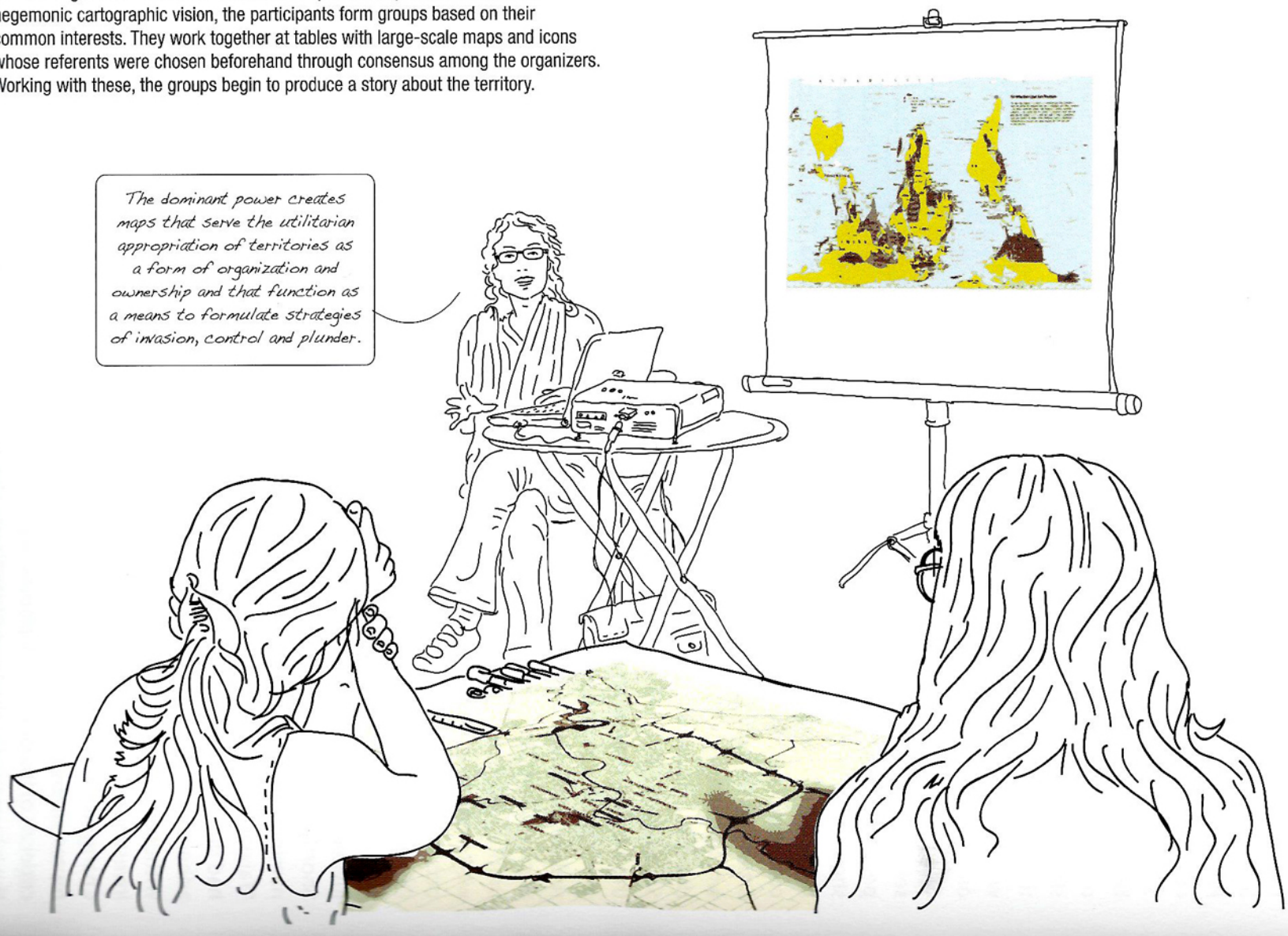
TRUTH IS CON-CRETE

A Handbook for Artistic Strategies in Real Politics

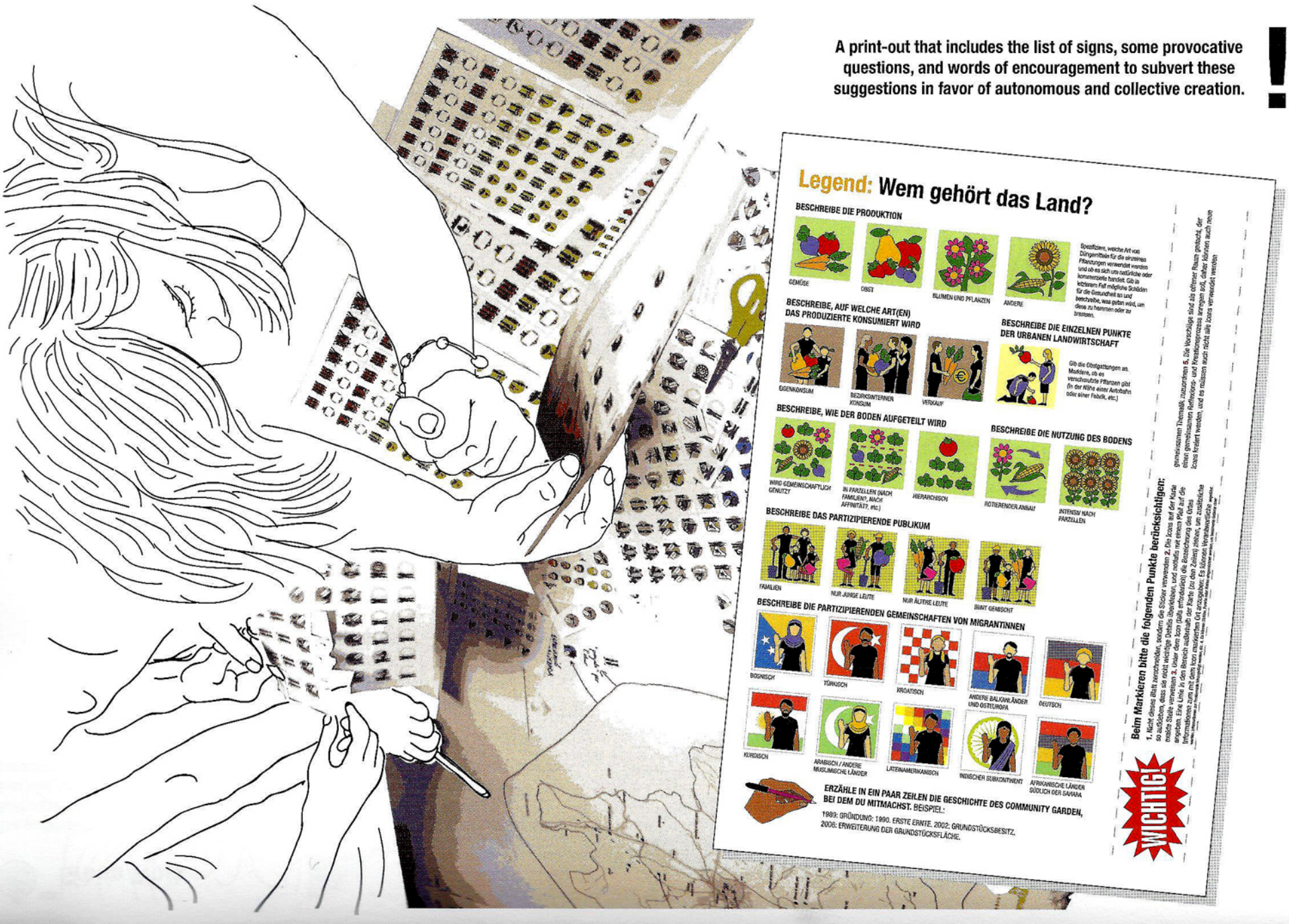
45' Presentation

After seeing a visual exhibition that reflects upon the importance of a counter-hegemonic cartographic vision, the participants form groups based on their common interests. They work together at tables with large-scale maps and icons whose referents were chosen beforehand through consensus among the organizers. Working with these, the groups begin to produce a story about the territory.

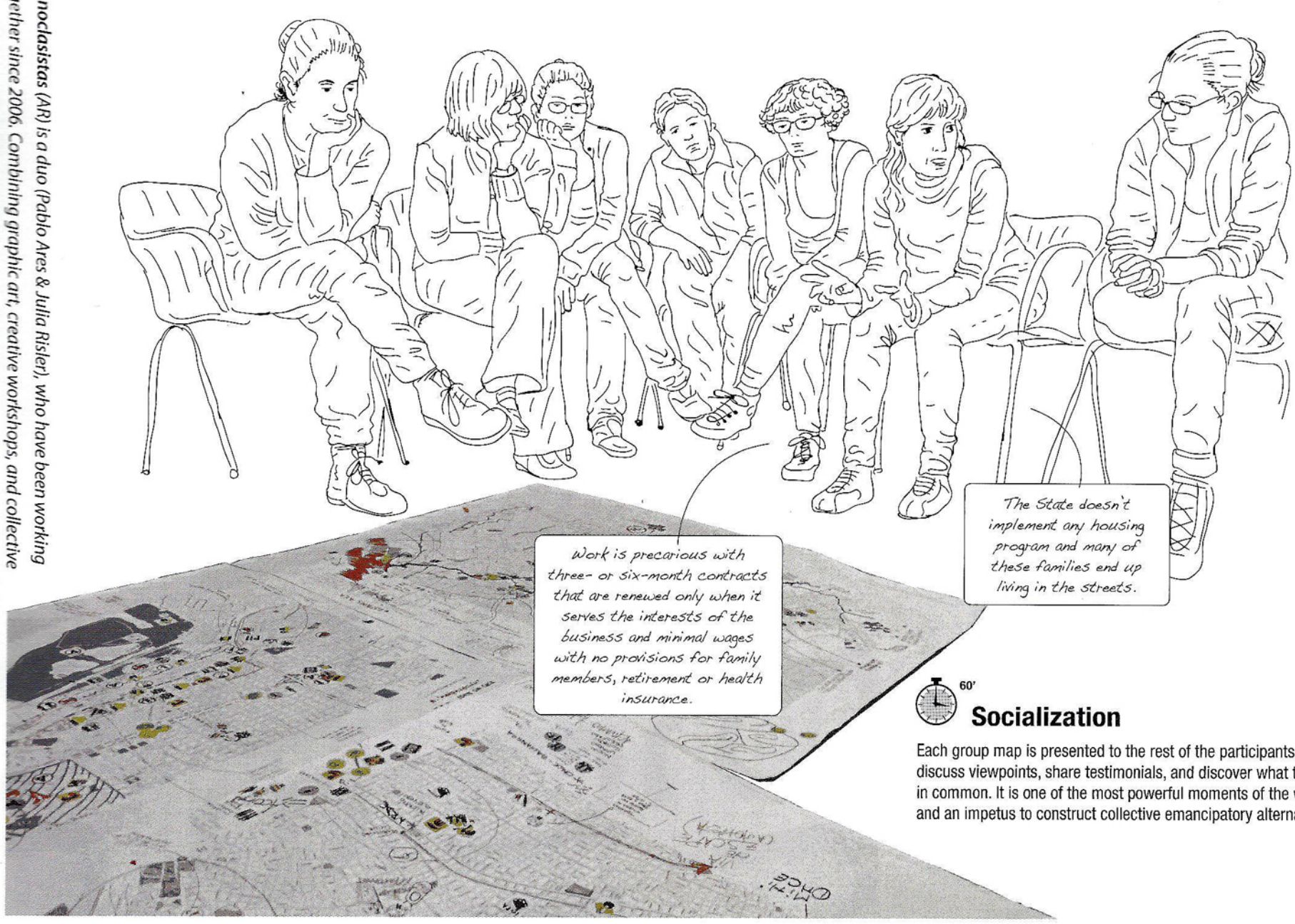


120' Group Work

The participants share their everyday experiences and knowledge. In a first pass they open up their capacities of imagination and recollection to draw and demarcate the territory. Everyone has something to contribute. The words are joined by drawings and slogans to condemn or problematize specific situations and also to signpost organized forms of resistance.



A print-out that includes the list of signs, some provocative questions, and words of encouragement to subvert these suggestions in favor of autonomous and collective creation.



60'

Socialization

Each group map is presented to the rest of the participants in order to discuss viewpoints, share testimonials, and discover what they have in common. It is one of the most powerful moments of the workshop and an impetus to construct collective emancipatory alternatives.

Iconoclasistas (AR) is a duo (Pablo Ares & Julia Risler), who have been working together since 2006. Combining graphic art, creative workshops, and collective research, they produce mapping and other resources for free circulation, appropriation, and use, aimed at strengthening communication, forging solidarity networks, and promoting practices of collaboration and resistance.

"Truth is Concrete"—this sentence was emblazoned over Bertolt Brecht's desk in his Danish exile. A constant reminder in times of extreme political turbulence never to forget the reality around us. How can art play a role in social and political struggles? Can it be a tool with which to shape the world rather than just a reflection of it?

Following steirischer herbst festival's twenty-four hour, seven-day marathon camp of the same name, *Truth is Concrete* takes the possibility of concrete truth as a working hypothesis for both art and activism, and looks for direct action and concrete knowledge. For an art that not only represents and documents but engages performatively in specific political and social situations. And for an activism that not only acts for the sake of acting but searches for intelligent, creative means of self-empowerment.

Ninety-nine entries describe very different tactics and strategies, written by practitioners from all over the world, mapping the broad field of engaged art and artistic activism in our times. Additional essays focus on the philosophy and modalities behind the many struggles to make this world a better place.

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